



THE INTRICACY OF MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S SAKHARAMBINDER

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ABSTRACT

Vijay Tendulkar is a versatile writer who explores the hidden feelings of human beings. His plays set as a mirror to the burning issues of the society. Sakharan Binder is a very realistic play which throws light on the inner intricacy of man and woman. All his characters become real persons with flesh and blood. Vijay Tendulkar agrees this, "I could not proceed to write a play unless I saw my characters as real life people, unless I could see them moving, doing things by themselves, unless I heard them emoting, talking to each other. I was never able to begin writing my plan with an idea or a theme in mind". The five characters in the play give different nuance of their character in different time. The complexities of the characters are very naturally portrayed and the readers and shocked by the nude truth. The women Lakshmi and Champa are two contrasting characters. Lakshmi is expelled by her husband and Champa willingly leaves her husband. It's like representing virtuous and evilness and yet they agree to stay together under one roof leading the climax. The Protagonist Binder is also having a contrasting character called Shinde. Dawood's is like a special appearance yet significant to raise turmoil in the leading characters.

KEYWORDS: Man-Woman relation, intricacy, violence, sexual desire, sin.

Vijay Tendulkar is a versatile writer who explores the hidden feelings of human beings. His plays set as a mirror to the burning issues of the society. Sakharan Binder is a very realistic play which throws light on the inner intricacy of man and woman. All his characters become real persons with flesh and blood. Vijay Tendulkar agrees this, "I could not proceed to write a play unless I saw my characters as real life people, unless I could see them moving, doing things by themselves, unless I heard them emoting, talking to each other. I was never able to begin writing my plan with an idea or a theme in mind". The five characters in the play give different nuance of their character in different time. The complexities of the characters are very naturally portrayed and the readers and shocked by the nude truth. The women Lakshmi and Champa are two contrasting characters. Lakshmi is expelled by her husband and Champa willingly leaves her husband. It's like representing virtuous and evilness and yet they agree to stay together under one roof leading the climax. The Protagonist Binder is also having a contrasting character called Shinde. Dawood's is like a special appearance yet significant to raise turmoil in the leading characters.

The present paper tries to interpret the intricacy of man-women relation in Vijay Tendulkar's Sakharan Binder. Sakharan Binder who works at a press is rebellious towards the conventional roles played by men in the society. He is a self-willed man and defies the norms and regulations set by the society. Without faith in the institution of marriage and its bondage between man and woman he leads his life with women but without marriage. He always speaks truth about himself that he is a drunkard, shameless, rascal, womaniser and pauper. But he is a good hearted man giving shelter to the destitute married ladies who were literally thrown away from their husbands. He feels he is better than those men who do all wrongs and wear a mask of innocence. Sakharan is very foul mouthed because of his bad childhood. He is just a born Brahmin but he doesn't follow any Brahminian ways. He had left home at the young age of eleven and from then without love, affection and caring from anybody had become beast like. Through the mouth piece of Sakharan Tendulkar is questioning the hypocrisy of men, sanctity of marriage, loyalty in relationships, sexual desires, violence, purity of mind and body.

Sakharan had a mutual consent with the ladies before he took them inside his house. Both of them are free to move out without any obligation if anyone gets fed up with the other. Its like a contract with them he repeats to everyone that he is the master of the house and need to be respected. Even he promises them to get two square meals and a saree per year and while departing he would buy a ticket of their destination. Sakharan had seen many dedicated ladies who were thrown by their husbands and still they worshiped them. "The fellow who's out to kill them- he's a god! The Chap who saves them- he's just a man!" (128). The previous lady he had was suffering from T.B and he had taken her to hospital and even did the last rites after her death. Sakharan questions the husbandness in men who can't look after their kids and wives and just kick them every day and treat woman just like dirt. Sakharan is happy and content with the way he has fixed with the live-in-relationship, with the women. He is having aversion towards marriage where two people are forcibly tied together without any escape. "It's only when a woman gets married that she goes wrong. She begins to feel; 'Now I've got my man!' But the husband – he's a proper swine! He ties her down: he doesn't get tied down himself! He flits around again – a free bird!" (130). He feels whores are better than these men and they would reach God first as they did everything to fill their tummy never tied anybody nor tormented but treated all equally. The cast

off wives are so dedicated to their husbands and adhere to the customs that they never utter their husbands name also. Sakharan laughs at them and says "If you're clean and straight, Dawood, there's not a god in this world who can do you any harm" (142). He is Omnist and asks Dawood to join in Ganapati Aarti, while Laxmi is reluctant to have him in the puja. She says, "How can a Muslim join in a prayer to Ganapati?". He hits her hard for her objection. Sakharan is very demanding and when Laxmi gets tired of balancing with him and gets into a heated argument. But Sakharan can't take it and is ready to send her out of his home after her years stay. When he gets ready to send her Laxmi is not willing but leaves without a choice.

Sakharan had received the clue so he had already planned to get a woman in Laxmi's place. She is wife of police Foudar Shinde. Champa is younger than Laxmi. After coming to his home she asks him to get food and tea. Though Sakharan hesitates to do and calls it as a woman's job she makes him to do it. For the first time Sakharan is startled by the behaviour of Champa who is not womanly. All the seven ladies were different from her Champa who had obliged him sincerely. Lakshmi is homely, who does household chores and content in doing that looks after home, does puja to God and by her work she had left a mark on Sakharan's mind. Champa is different the moment she sees Dawood she openly says "He's nice" and gives seductive look to him. Sakharan feels jealous of him and says he will only go to Dawood's shop to avoid his coming home. Champa is gutsy and kicks her husband in front of these two men and they are shocked to witness her strength. But her husband was always behind her and threatened her to kill himself. Champa had left him and she is not bothered if he dies also. Shinde had married her before she attained her puberty. She is having bad memories of her marriage and he had tortured her. Initially Champa is unwilling to play the role of wife to Sakharan but after having drinks she allows him to do whatever he wants. Champa satisfies his physical thirst in such a way that he is bewitched by her. He stops working and stays at home in greed of having more pleasure of her with drinks. When Dawood as a good friend warns him he says, "Nobody in this place can be cleaner than me. Every single one of those damned fellows is soiled, filthy. Trying to look clean outside. Stuffed with dirt inside. (173). He starts drinking even in day time. When Laxmi was there he had aarti and puja with Champa he drinks on the day of Dasara also.

The greatest twist of the story is when Laxmi comes back to him after getting thrown away by her nephew. Though Sakharan is reluctant to keep her at home it is Champa who shows pity on her. The two contrasting Characters under one roof. Laxmi was thrown out by her husband as they didn't have children and Champa left her husband as he was impotent. Champa would never have a husband just for the sake of his name. She is even against praying Gods like Laxmi and says, "They don't come and live your hell for you – those gods and Brahmins". (180). If Laxmi was in the place of Champa she would have lived her life in content with the man. She would have been happy to have his name but Champa doesn't want her husband's platonic love and affection. She just aspires for physical love. She can't go on getting hanged with a man in that way she is quite independent. She says to Laxmi who believes in fate. "I'm on my own If they're there well, they're there, for all that they're worth. If not, I'm all by myself, and all alone. That's the way it is! (181) Champa who is stone hearted is showing concern towards Laxmi but warns her to be in her limit. Laxmi just wants a roof on her head and ready to do any hard work for it. Champa is bored of doing household work and it was difficult for her to manage Sakharan and house. She says,

"You look after the house, I'll look after him. Anyway, I can't cope with both. You stay alive and I'll stay alive, too" (181). The two ladies agreed to stay together but Sakharam was against it.

Sakharam in his 14 years of arrangement never lived with two women. He had not experienced anything of this sort and for the first time he was infixed. He wants to throw Laxmi but the words spoken by her prick him. He gets disturbed and says, "I don't want to see her face again. Shameless wretch. Talks about dying with her head on my lap" (185). Laxmi witnesses Champa's physical love with Dawood. She is shocked and describes her loyalty to Sakharam. She had considered Sakharam as her husband and tied mangalustra in his name by herself. She had the sense of belonging to him and wants to die on his lap like a married woman. Laxmi who can relate easily with Shinde treats him friendly by giving food and nursing him when he is hurt by Champa. Even after getting good kicks and bleeding he comes asking for Champa to beat him. When Champa learns about Shinde that he is entertained by Laxmi in her absence she gets angry and reprimands her. Laxmi feels she is good and virtuous woman. She prays God not to forgive her as Champa is evil. Banerjee rightly opines, "Laxmi develops an asexual relationship with Fauzdar Shinde while Champa develops a sexual association with Daud", since Sakharam can no longer sexually satisfy her. Though Laxmi finds nothing wrong with her association with Shinde, her moral sense is outraged by Champa's affair with Daud, and she uses this opportunity to malign her rival. This brings out the latent hatred in Laxmi for Champa."

Champa is not satisfied with Sakharam and is able to find the difference in him after Laxmi's arrival he had become cold in bed. She can't take him anymore. She tells him on his face: "She's made an impotent ninny of you. Don't have the guts to take me before her. You turn into a corpse – a worm" (193). These words of Champa directly crack his manhood and gets ready to throw Laxmi out of his house. Before leaving she reveals about Champa's relation with Dawood. Sakharam is unable to digest this and in rage kills her. Laxmi after hearing this from Sakharam, takes Champa's murder in a very light way and says, "Anyways she was sinner She'll go to hell. Not you. I've been a virtuous woman. My virtuous deeds will see both of us through. I'll stay with you. I'll look after you. I'll do what you say. And I'll die with my head on your lap". (197). Laxmi who is so delicate, kind hearted shows immense strength and presence of mind. She asks Sakharam not to keep the body too long and bury it inside the home. She takes the name of God and defends the act of murder and burying her. Sakharam is no more the same man after this. Laxmi makes Sakharam dependent on her. Finally making the best use of the situation like an opportunist she sketches to tie him to her. The cruelty and cold blooded nature of Laxmi cannot be compared to any other characters.

All the characters Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa exhibit both goodness and evilness hidden in them. There is kind and empathetic heart in Sakharam to give food and shelter to the castoff wives. His intense love for carnal pleasures provokes him to be devil like and kills Champa. Laxmi's monstrous nature is visible only after the death of Champa in the way she tried to clear her body in calm and composed way. Champa is ruthless in treating her husband. Man and Woman cannot get along well as they try to dominate each other. The undercurrent conflict of mind and body is evident in the play. The mind always aspires for goodness and body seeks for pleasure. Sakharam kills his lust by murdering Champa. If he had controlled his body and sexual desire he would have not fallen as a human being. There is serenity and chastity in Laxmi in the beginning and later shows her true colour and agitation and concupiscence with Champa. The two Women Laxmi and Champa stand for Pious, innocent and virtuous nature and seductive, selfish, immoral nature respectively. All human beings inherit faults in them nobody is perfect, but it is up to them to nurture goodness or evilness. Sakharam is a frank man and when he is deceived by Champa he commits sin. He was good tempered with placid Laxmi. Laxmi's motherly affection and care had made him human with all imperfection. But at the end all are sinners. Thus Vijay Tendulkar exposes all innocence and wicked in man and woman. He questions the immorality of humans which is the prime source of all evil. Being a woman Champa has shades of man the way she indulges in animal love and Sakharam being man had gone jealous like woman. So man and woman lie on the same plane and being human is crucial. The complexities of the characters are very naturally portrayed and the readers are disgusted by the nude truth. Arundhati Banerjee comments on the naturalism in the play: "In the portrayal of this lower strata (stratum) of society; Tendulkar's plays signified a definite departure from the main stream Marathi drama that mostly dealt with the more privileged section of society. One of the reasons why there was such a reaction against *Sakharam Binder* was its burning naturalism. Here was a raw chunk of life with all its ugliness and crudity which was more than a shock to refined and prudish middle-class audiences. Such a direct confrontation with 'vulgar' reality was difficult for them to bear."

REFERENCES:

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